

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Effects of Hurricane Katrina on Quarterly Services Survey (QSS)

Can the Census Bureau estimate the effect of Hurricane Katrina on the revenue estimates?

No. We cannot isolate the effect of Hurricane Katrina on the Quarterly Services Survey (QSS) estimates since the sample is designed to measure services activity at the national level and not for specific geographic areas.

Even though we cannot isolate the effect, we did receive indications from companies that the hurricanes had both positive and negative effects on their quarterly revenue. Some firms reported a drop in revenue due to permanent or temporary closures and others reduced business due to damage, fewer customers, and/or lack of employees. On the other hand, some firms reported revenue increases in covered services for the affected areas.

The areas most affected by the hurricanes accounted for a minimal percentage of total U.S. services activity in the 2002 Economic Census. See <http://www.census.gov/econ/www/Katrina.htm> for data from the 2002 Economic Census for the Gulf Coast areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Does the Census Bureau have quarterly estimates of revenue for the affected areas?

No. We cannot separately quantify the impact on the affected areas because the QSS is designed to estimate revenue at the United States level only.

Was the Census Bureau able to collect information from firms operating within the affected areas?

Yes. In Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, company response was in a normal range. Further, many large, regional, and other multi-location firms with reporting offices outside the affected states responded at a normal rate and included revenue data for locations, both open and closed, located in the affected areas.

Has the reliability of the revenue estimate changed because of the hurricane?

No, the reliability has not changed substantially. At the national level, reported revenue exhibited variation similar to that for prior quarters. A few individual firms reported large increases or decreases in their revenue because of the effects of the hurricane, but this additional variation was not large enough to affect the reliability of national estimates.